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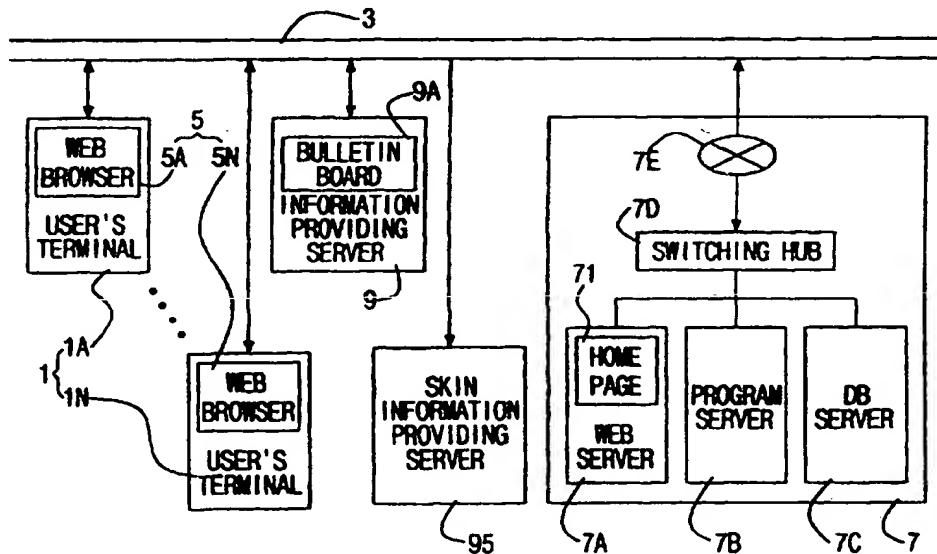
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(54) Title: ADVERTISING SYSTEM USING SKIN IMAGE APPLIED IN WINDOWS SCREEN OF USER TERMINAL AND ADVERTISING METHOD THEREOF



(57) Abstract: An advertising system and method is provided in which a general skin image or an advertising skin image capable of satisfying an aesthetic desire of a user can be applied to a menu portion on a Windows-shell screen. An advertising skin according to a target marketing can be provided on a network based on a client/server system in the case of an advertising skin image. The advertising system includes a number of user terminals which can be accessed to the Internet, at least one information providing server for providing at least one skin image data provided from a corresponding home page to a user terminal when a user accesses the home page through the user terminal, and a system server for allowing the user to download a skin image controller when the user accesses the home page in a server.

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ADVERTISING SYSTEM USING SKIN IMAGE APPLIED IN WINDOWS
SCREEN OF USER TERMINAL AND ADVERTISING METHOD THEREOF

Technical Field

5 The present invention relates to an advertising system using a skin image applied to a Windows screen and an advertising method thereof, and more particularly, to a method for applying a skin image to a Windows screen in which a general skin image or an advertising skin image capable
10 of satisfying an aesthetic desire of a user can be applied to a menu portion on a Windows -shell screen in a Windows -series operating system (OS), and an advertising skin image according to a target marketing can be dynamically provided on a network based on a client/server system in the case
15 of an advertising skin image.

Background Art

Recently, since the Internet is combined in development of an information telecommunications network and distribution of personal computers, various information providing services and commercial transaction activities which have been processed on an existing off-line system can be processed on an on-line system irrespective of times and places.

25 Further, only Internet experts could use the Internet efficiently at the initial time of the Internet. However, since the World Wide Web (WWW) was developed and the web

browser programs have been developed to make users conveniently use the WWW, anyone can use the Internet easily and thus Internet users increase explosively in numbers. In particular, the number of persons using the Internet in 5 Korea which showed a slow growth rate until 1998 increased up to ten millions in 2000.

A program which has been being widely distributed and used among web browser programs necessary for accessing the Internet is the Internet Explorer of Microsoft. In this 10 case, the Windows -series OS system, that is, the various Windows screens such as Windows searcher, My computer screen, various folder screens and so on, of the Windows 95, Windows 98, Windows 2000 and Windows NT are based on the Internet Explorer.

15 Recently, many Internet users install a desired skin image on a menu bar or tool bar in a dedicated browser like Winamp or J-audio, and construct and use their own unique browser circumstances.

At present, such a skin image providing method is 20 largely divided into a plug-in method provided in a website of www.hotbar.com and an independently developed web browser provided in a website of www.solipistic.com, UnitWin 2000 or Netsgo.

First, in the case of the Hotbar method providing a 25 skin image by use of a plug-in method, a skin cannot be changed dynamically. In other words, in the case of Hotbar, a user should change a skin image directly when the user

intends to change the skin image. Also, when a user intends to change a skin image in the case of Hotbar, his or her produced skin image file should be registered on the Hotbar site, to then change the skin image, which causes 5 inconveniences to users.

The Hotbar method occupies a space of a predetermined portion on the Internet Explorer, which is a similar portion to a program having another advertising technique as a banner advertising application. Thus, the Hotbar method 10 causes inconveniences to general users.

In addition, a skin is applied if the Hotbar method is performed. However, the skin image occupies a separate screen space. Also, additional links designated in the Hotbar which are not needed for general users are provided 15 as Favorites, which is a method unfit for a concept of optimizing a general users circumstance.

Meanwhile, in the case of the method for applying a skin image in the independently dedicated browser, a separate browser can be downloaded, to then apply a skin. 20 Thus, using a separate browser to apply a skin causes inconveniences to users.

Also, in the case of applying a skin by use of the independently dedicated browser, users are forced to change an existing browser into the independently dedicated 25 browser.

Meanwhile, in view of an advertisement, since an existing banner advertisement is inserted into a

corresponding particular page and shows up on that page, if a user leaves that page, the corresponding page does not show up. Further, an actual click rate of a banner advertisement is nothing but 1-2%, and ordinary users do 5 not recognize the banner advertisement in most cases. Also, banner advertisements are too deficient to satisfy an aesthetic desire of users.

Further, banner advertisements cannot circulate, repeat and change an advertisement. It is not possible to 10 assign various stories with respect to an advertisement, or fabricate a set of series advertisements by images, to thereby induce users to collect banner advertisements to thereby enjoy an effect of advertisements.

The above-described methods providing a skin image 15 have not been tried to transfer an advertising image. Further, it is not possible to provide advertising information dynamically in real-time. Thus, an advertising owner cannot realize a target marketing through an analysis of users.

20 Meanwhile, although a Korean patent application No. 10-2000-0032246 filed on June 12, 2000, and entitled "an advertising system using a skin image dynamically applied on a Windows screen and an advertising method thereof, and a computer readable recording medium storing the 25 advertisement method" solves the above-described problems, a Windows skin fit in a moved website is not automatically set when a user intends to move from a current website in

use to another website by using a web browser. As a result, the contents of an advertisement performed through a Windows skin are not appropriate for the contents of a corresponding website, to thereby lower an efficiency of advertisement.

5 Also, a skin image set on a Windows screen which is currently used by a user is fixed unless the setting values of the skin image are altered. Thus, the skin images cannot be used while altering the current skin image into various images.

10

Disclosure of the Invention

To solve the above problems, it is an object of the present invention to provide an advertising system using a skin image dynamically applied on a Windows screen and 15 an advertising method thereof, in which a general skin image or an advertising skin image capable of satisfying an aesthetic desire of a user can be applied to a menu portion on a Windows -shell screen in a Windows -series operating system (OS), and an advertising skin image according to a 20 target marketing can be dynamically provided on a network based on a client/server system in the case of an advertising skin image, to thereby enhance an advertisement effectiveness.

It is another object of the present invention to 25 provide an advertising system using a skin image applied on a Windows screen and an advertising method thereof, in which a separate space is not occupied, an interface is

provided so that individual users conveniently use it, and a collection dedicated skin image is provided, to thereby suffice users' collection desires.

To accomplish the above object of the present invention, there is provided an advertising system using a dynamic Windows skin applied on a Windows screen in a user terminal, the advertising system comprising: a number of user terminals each having a web browser therein, which can be accessed to the Internet by using the web browser; at least one skin information providing server for providing at least one skin image data provided from a corresponding home page to a user terminal when a user accesses the Internet through the user terminal; and a system server for allowing the user to download a skin image controller when the user accesses the home page in a server through the Internet from the user terminal, wherein the system server includes at least one web server for allowing the user terminal to download the skin image controller and various skin image files upon request of the user when the number of user terminals access a home page in the system server, a program server for providing advertisement skin image information based on a user analysis to a Windows screen in the user terminal while maintaining a connection state to the server through the Internet when the user selects an advertisement menu and managing a user's advertisement exposure time for compensation for the user, by the skin image controller installed in the user terminal, and a

database (DB) server for storing and managing various data including member information, advertisement use information and various skin image information.

The advertising system further comprises at least one 5 information provision server for allowing the user terminal to download the skin image controller when the user accesses bulletin boards in various servers through the Internet with his or her own terminal.

Databases (DBs) provided in the database server 10 include a membership information DB containing each membership information, a membership use information DB containing information on how each member uses a home page site in the system server and an advertisement of the skin image controller, a skin DB containing each skin image 15 information, a collection skin DB containing each information of a collection skin issued for collection in a limited number, and a bulletin board & other DB storing other information necessary for operation of various bulletin boards and the home page.

20 The membership use information DB comprises a cyber money of each member, a collection skin information, and information about a residence place, age, gender and job of each member.

A main menu interface is provided in order to interface 25 the user terminal and the user when the skin image controller is performed. The main menu interface comprises a main menu display positioned in the upper portion, for displaying a

plurality of main menus as icons, a skin list display for providing an interface for allowing a user to select one of the plurality of the stored skin files, a sub-menu display for displaying menus having functions of managing the skin 5 files displayed on the skin list display, and a preview display for displaying the skin file selected in the skin list display in size smaller than an actual size and assisting the user to select the skin file.

The plurality of main menus comprises an end menu for 10 terminating the skin image controller, a set menu for establishing an environment of a program necessary for operating the skin image controller, a home page menu having a function of loading a new browser and moving the Windows screen to the home page of the system server, a skin view 15 menu for toggling a skin function of the browser, a random conversion menu for automatically converting a number of the selected skin files in random sequence, and a skin making menu for converting the user's drawn picture file or the existing picture file into a skin file.

20 According to another aspect of the present invention, there is also provided an advertising method using a dynamic Windows skin, the advertising method comprising the steps of: accessing one of a home page in a system server and a bulletin board in an information provision server, which 25 are connected through the Internet from a user's terminal by a user, and downloading a skin image controller program and at least one skin file from the selected home page or

bulletin board so as to be registered and installed in a start program in a terminal; establishing the skin file at random sequence and converting the skin file into a browser skin; displaying a main menu interface on a display screen
5 of the terminal in which the main menu interface includes a main menu display in response to the skin image controller program executed by the user; and replacing the currently displayed advertisement skin by an advertisement skin provided from a corresponding website, if the user moves
10 another website from the currently accessed website.

Also, the advertising method according to the present invention further comprises the steps of: accessing the system server from the terminal, for receiving a plurality of advertisement skin files; designating a sequence at
15 random with respect to which one of the received plurality of advertisement skin files will be advertised; and replacing the advertisement skin periodically in every set time according to the set sequence and distributing the replaced advertisement skin on the Windows screen.

20 The advertising method further comprises the steps of: judging whether the current advertisement has been selected in response to a user's click of an end menu in a main menu; storing compensation details corresponding to a time for which a user has viewed an advertisement in a member use
25 information database of the system server, in the case that an advertisement has been selected just before in the result of judgment, and outputting a message concerning the user's

altered use details to the user; and removing a tray icon created according to installation of the skin image controller and terminating the skin image controller program after having undergone the termination procedure
5 of the system.

The main menu comprises an end menu for terminating the skin image controller, a set menu for establishing an environment of a program necessary for operating the skin image controller, a home page menu having a function of
10 loading a new browser and moving the Windows screen to the home page of the system server, a skin view menu for toggling a skin function of the browser, a random conversion menu for automatically converting a number of the selected skin files in random sequence, and a skin making menu for
15 converting the user's drawn picture file or the existing picture file into a skin file, wherein an advertisement skin display procedure is terminated in response to selection of one of the main menu and a user interface of the selected menu is provided to a main menu interface.

20 As described above, the present invention suffices a convenience and an aesthetic desire as well as a collection desire of users, and also provides a fun. Also, advertisers can escape from an existing banner advertisement or a discontinuous advertisement and thus maximize an
25 advertising effect while sufficing an aesthetic desire of users positively. In addition, an operator who operates the system according to the present invention can achieve

a total profit besides securing members and advertising fees.

Brief Description of the Drawings

5 The above objects and other advantages of the present invention will become more apparent by describing the preferred embodiments thereof in more detail with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

10 FIG. 1 is a schematic block diagram of an advertising system using a skin applied on the Windows screen in a user terminal according to the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a view showing a DB structure of a DB server of FIG. 1;

15 FIGs. 3A through 3C are flowchart views for explaining a method of applying a skin image on the Windows screen in a user terminal and an advertising method using the skin image application method according to the present invention;

20 FIGs. 4A through 4B are flowchart views for explaining a skin file providing process when a user accesses a particular home page;

FIG. 5 shows the structure of a main menu interface with respect to a skin image controller;

FIG. 6 shows a main menu of the skin image controller;

25 FIG. 7A shows an example of a browser at the state where a skin control tag is not used in a home page; and

FIG. 7B shows an example of a browser in the case that

a skin control tag is used in a home page.

Best Mode for Carrying out the Invention

A preferred embodiment of the present invention will
5 be described below in more detail with reference to the
accompanying drawings.

First, a network of an advertising system using a skin applied on a Windows screen in a user's terminal according to the present invention includes a number of user terminals
10 (PC) 1a-1n each having a web browser 5a-5n such as the Internet Explorer therein, which can be accessed to the Internet 3 by using the web browser 5, a system server 7 and an information providing server 9 for allowing a user to download a skin image controller to be described later,
15 when the user accesses a home page 71 in the system server 7 or a bulletin board 9a in various information providing server 9 through the Internet 3 with the user terminal 1, and a skin information providing server 95 providing a separate skin file to a user.

20 The connection between the user terminal 1 and the system server 7 or the information providing server 9 is accomplished by a wired method using an Internet connection via a modem and a PSTN, or a dedicated line or an ISDN, or a wireless Internet connection method via a cellular, a PCS,
25 microwave or a satellite telecommunications network. Each user's terminal 1 can be accessed to the Internet by adopting one of the above-described Internet connection methods.

Preferably, the terminal 1 is a Windows -based personal computer (PC) or a terminal which includes a microprocessor not lower than a Pentium series, a hard disc drive, and a communication modem, in which a web browser 5 such as the 5 Internet Explorer supporting the Internet access is mounted.

Further, each terminal 1 is a workstation, a general portable phone terminal such as PCS and PHS, a portable digital assistant (PDA), a settop box, a digital television, 10 or a web phone in addition to a PC if the terminal 1 is an Internet accessible terminal.

Also, the system server 7 includes a number of web server 7a for allowing the plurality of user terminals to download the skin image controller 20 and various skin image 15 files from a database server 7c upon a user's request when the plurality of user terminals 1 access a home page 71 in a system server 7 by using a web browser 5, a program server 7b for providing advertisement skin image information based on a user analysis to a Windows screen to a user terminal 20 while maintaining a connection state through the Internet 3 when the user selects an advertisement menu by means of the skin image controller 20 installed in the user terminal and managing a user advertisement exposure time, a database (DB) server 7c for storing and managing various data 25 including membership information, advertisement use information and skin image information, and a router 7e and a switching hub 7d for distributing a packet received via

the Internet 3 through a LAN card installed in the plurality of web servers 7a.

In the internal connection method adopted in the system server 7, the number of web servers 14 is determined 5 according to how many user terminals 1a-1n are connected to the system server 7. The network in the system server 1 may be configured into a well-known system according to how the number of web servers and the security system called a firewall are configured.

10 The DB server 7c can be configured using a well-known relational database management system (RDBMS) such as Oracle, SQL (Structured Query Language) server, and Informix.

As shown in FIG. 2, databases (DBs) provided in the 15 database server 7c include a membership information DB 11 containing each membership information such as a member identification, password, name, gender, residence number, e-mail, telephone number, address, and job, a membership use information DB 12 containing information on how each 20 member uses a home page site 71 in the system server 7 and an advertisement of the skin image controller 20 such as a cyber money of each member, collection skin information, and member marketing information such as town, age, gender and job, a skin DB 13 containing each skin image information 25 such as a skin name and explanation, information concerning to what category each skin image does belong, a skin registration, a skin registration date, and the number of

downloading a skin, a collection skin DB 14 containing each information of a collection skin such as kind information of a collection skin, an owner of each collection skin, and the number of the left collection skin, which are separated
5 from general skin information and managed in order to manage the number of the collection skins, and a bulletin board & other DB 15 storing other information necessary for operation of various bulletin boards such as a free bulletin board, a question and answer (Q & A) bulletin board, and
10 an official announcement board, and the home page.

In the case that an advertisement view menu is selected in the skin image controller 20, the member use information DB 12 and the member information DB 11 should be simultaneously accessed. In this case, the two DBs 11 and
15 12 are overlapped in view of the town, age, gender and job portions. However, portions which are frequently used in the program and site are inserted in the member use information, which heightens an efficiency in operations of the skin image controller 20 and the home page site.

20 The skin information providing server 95 means a corresponding home page server in the case that a skin file is automatically provided to a user from the home page when the user accesses the particular home page through the Internet. When a user accesses a particular website using
25 the user terminal, the website provides skin information to the user terminal to apply a browser skin in the user terminal. The website should be cooperative with the

system server, in order to determine a protocol according to the skin information provision in advance. Accordingly, a skin file automatic conversion function is controlled and performed by the skin image controller 20.

5 If a skin image provided from the skin information providing server 95 is applied in the browser in the user terminal as described above, a publicity or advertisement with respect to a corresponding website can be directly performed. As a result, an advertising effect is
10 maximized.

An installation method of installing the skin image controller 20 according to the present invention and a use method thereof will be described in detail with reference to FIGs. 3A through 3D.

15 First, a user drives a web browser 5 in a user terminal 1, and accesses a home page 71 provided in a web server 7a of a system server 7 accessed to the Internet 3, or a bulletin board 9a in an information providing server 9 such as HITEL or CHOLLIAN which is one of the Korean information providing
20 websites, and downloads a program of the skin image controller 20, and installs the downloaded skin image controller program in the terminal 1 (S1 and S2).

Then, if a user installs the program of the skin image controller 20 in the terminal, the skin image controller program is automatically registered into a start program in the terminal. Thus, after installation, even if the icon of the skin image controller 20 is not clicked, the skin

image controller program is automatically executed when an OS is booted in the terminal.

However, when a user wishes to execute the skin image controller 20 manually, he or she double-clicks the icon 5 of the skin image controller 20 in order to execute the skin image controller 20 (S3). Here, in the case that the icon of the skin image controller 20 is double-clicked during execution of the skin image controller 20 in the user terminal 1, the skin image controller 20 automatically 10 judges and prevents the double execution command.

Then, if the skin image controller 20 is executed, an initial screen interface, that is, a main menu interface 20a is displayed on a monitor or a display screen in the terminal, as shown in FIG. 5 (S4).

15 In addition, in order to control the skin image controller 20, a tray icon is registered (S5) and a designated default skin is output and applied to the browser (S6).

Sequentially, if a user selects any one sub-menu in 20 the main menu and executes the selected sub-menu, a corresponding procedure is performed.

The main menu interface 20a includes a main menu display 21 positioned in the upper portion, for displaying a plurality of main menus 21a-21f indicated as icons, a skin 25 list display 22 for providing an interface for allowing a user to select one of the plurality of the stored skin files, a skin information display 23 for displaying detailed

information of the selected skin file, a sub-menu display 24 on which icons having a function of managing the skin list display 22 are disposed, and a preview display 25 for displaying the picture of the skin file selected in the skin 5 list display in size smaller than an actual size and assisting the user to select the skin file.

The main menu display 21 in the present invention has six main menus. A user can manipulate various operations through the main menus. For example, the user can perform 10 a program environmental establishment, a skin view and release, a skin display sequence establishment, a skin making, a termination, and so on.

Each menu on the main menu display 21 is indicated as an icon. If a user clicks a corresponding menu, the clicked 15 menu is executed. Respective menus include an end 21a, an establishment 21b, a home page 21f, a skin view 21d, a random conversion 21c, a skin making 21e, and son on.

The skin list display 22 enables a user to manage skin files as a general Windows searcher, and includes a folder 20 tree structure screen 22a for displaying a folder as a tree structure on one side, and a file information screen 22b for displaying skin files of the folder selected in the folder tree structure screen 22a in which corresponding file information is included in the skin files.

25 The preview display 25 displays the picture of the skin file selected in the file information screen 22b in size smaller than an actual size and assists the user to preview

the skin file and then select it when the user selects the skin file.

The main menu display 21 is divided into the following six parts. The operation of each menu will be described 5 with reference to FIGs. 3B and 3C.

1. End menu (21a)

When a user clicks an end menu 21a in the main menu (A1), this means that the skin image controller 20 is terminated. Then, after the tray icon is eradicated and 10 a termination procedure of various system side is undergone, the program of the skin image controller 20 is terminated (A11).

2. Set menu (21b)

When a user clicks a set menu 21b in the main menu (A2), 15 an environmental set of a program necessary for operating the skin image controller 20 can be performed (A21).

For example, the position of a folder where the skin file is stored can be set. It can be also set whether or not a start is performed using a tray icon, and whether or 20 not an automatic execution is performed when the Windows starts.

3. Home page menu (21f)

If a user clicks a home page menu 21f in the main menu (A3), the skin image controller 20 loads a new browser and 25 moves to the home page connected to the system server (A31).

4. Skin view menu (21d)

If a user clicks a skin view menu 21d in the main menu

(A4), it is ascertained whether a current screen has been at a skin view state just before he or she clicks (A41). If a current screen is at a skin view state, the skin view state is released (A42). If a current screen is not at a 5 skin view state, the current screen is converted into a skin view state (A43).

In other words, this skin view menu is a toggling icon. If a skin view has been selected before the skin view menu is clicked, the skin view state is released so that no skin 10 is applied in the browser. On the contrary, if a skin view has not been selected, the skin view is set to apply a skin in the browser.

5. Random conversion menu (21c)

If a user clicks a random conversion menu in the main 15 menu of the skin image controller 20, it is firstly ascertained whether the user terminal is connected to the Internet (B1). Then, advertisement files are downloaded from the system server (B2). However, if the user terminal is not connected to the Internet, it is ascertained whether 20 the user terminal is connected to the Internet with a predetermined interval of time, for example, five minutes (B21).

If advertisement files have been downloaded, a sequence of the advertisement files to be applied with a 25 skin is determined with respect to the downloaded advertisement files (B3). Here, the sequence can be determined with reference to an advertising cost, that is,

an advertising unit price.

Considering the sequence of the advertisement files determined in the above step, a final display sequence is determined with respect to the random folder skin files 5 including the advertisement files (B4).

Then, the determined first skin is converted into a browser skin (B5). Then, a corresponding skin is displayed for a predetermined skin display time, and if time passes, the browser skin is converted into the next sequential skin 10 (B7).

Here, the skin display time is determined equally with respect to all skins, or can be determined inequally with a difference based on an advertisement unit price as when the sequence has been determined.

15 6. Skin making menu (21e)

If a user draws a skin using his or her painting tool or selects existing picture file, the skin making menu 21e converts his or her drawn picture files or the existing picture files into a skin file (msk file) in order to fit 20 for the corresponding browser using the selected picture files. If a user clicks a skin making menu (A6), one of his or her drawn picture files or the existing picture files is selected (A61).

The skin image controller 20 converts the selected 25 picture files into skin files (A62).

The sub-menu display 24 includes icons each having 'folder view 24a/detailed view 24b', 'detail 24c', 'change

of name 24d', 'skin deletion 24e', or 'skin application 24f'. The 'folder view 24a/detailed view 24b' has a function of selecting whether the folder tree structure screen 22a of the skin list display 22 is displayed.

5 The 'detail 24c' enables file information with respect to the skin file selected by the user in the current skin list display 22, that is, information with respect to the kinds of the picture files such as jpg, bmp and tif, the file size, the file attribute such as readable and writable
10 file function, a file creation date, and a creator to be displayed.

The 'change of name 24d' has a function of changing the name of a skin file selected in the current skin list display 22. The 'skin deletion 24e' has a function of
15 deleting a skin file selected therein. The 'skin application 24f' has a function of applying the selected skin file in the browser skin.

The sub-menus are pop up if a menu button is pressed after any one skin file is selected in the user skin list
20 display 22 with a mouse select button. Accordingly, although icons 24a-24f in the sub-menu display 24 are used, corresponding functions can be used (A7 and A71 of FIG. 3B).

That is, if a menu button (mouse right-hand button in the case of a right-handed person) is pressed after any one
25 skin file is selected with a mouse in the skin list display 22, a sub-menu such as the above-described sub-menus are pop up, and thus one of the sub-menus can be selected and

executed.

The skin image controller 20 according to the present invention having the above-described function has the following skin application methods.

5 First, if a user accesses a home page using a browser, a browser skin is automatically converted into a particular skin designated in the home page (see FIGs. 4A and 4B).

10 Second, if a user installs the skin image controller 20, various skin files are stored in a skin folder, the 10 various skin files are automatically converted with a predetermined interval of time in random sequence, in order to alter a skin.

Two kinds of functions will be described in detail below.

15 1. Automatic conversion function to be converted into a particular skin according to an instruction of a corresponding home page when a user intends to access the home page (FIGs. 4A and 4B)

20 If a particular tag is set in a home page, and in the 20 case that a skin image controller 20 of the present invention has been installed in a user terminal of a user who visits a corresponding home page, the skin image controller 20 recognizes the particular tag automatically, and changes a user's browser skin into a home page producer's desired 25 skin. Accordingly, such an automatic conversion function can be used for an advertising method differing from an Internet advertising method based on an existing banner,

in view of an advertisement function.

In other words, if a particular tag such as the following HTML source is set in a home page,

```
<HTML>
5      .....
<embed src='/advertisement.msk' height=0 width=0
hidden>
      .....
(/HTML>
10      this means an instruction source code which instructs
a user computer to apply a skin file called
'advertisement.msk' to a user browser skin.
```

Thus, if a user accesses a home page in which the HTML tag is set (C1), it is ascertained whether the above HTML tag has been set (C2).

If the tag is not set, a skin processing is not performed (C21). If the tag has been set, it is ascertained whether a skin conversion is set according to the home page tag (C3).

20 In the result of ascertainment, if the tag is not set, a skin processing is not performed (C31). If the tag has been set, the skin file (skin file set in the HTML tag, and the 'advertisement.msk' file exemplified in the HTML tag) existing in the home page server is automatically downloaded 25 (C4), and thus the user terminal browser skin is automatically applied to the skin file (C5).

That is, after a home page producer uses the skin image

controller 20, to then produce a skin file (called a msk) which is a skin file, he or she inserts the above HTML tag simply into his or her home page, to thereby change a browser skin of a visitor who visits his or her home page.

5 In the accompanying FIG. 7A, when accessing home page where the home page skin-related tag is not set, the upper portion of a browser screen including a browser menu and a tool bar in the browser screen is formed of an original shape.

10 However, as shown in FIG. 7B, when accessing home page where the home page skin-related tag is set, the upper portion of a browser screen including a browser menu and a tool bar in the browser screen is formed of a skin file applied. Accordingly, the skin file is displayed on the upper portion of the browser screen.

15 When the above-described function is used for an Internet advertisement, an advertisement completely differing from an existing advertisement using the Internet can be performed. Above all, differences between the present invention and a banner advertisement system which is the most 20 similar to the present invention in view of the fact that an advertisement is performed through a user's page view are as follows.

25 The banner advertisement system is same as the present invention in view of the fact that an advertisement is performed through a user's page view, using the Internet, but has big differences in view of the following matters.

(a) In the case of an existing banner advertisement,

it is difficult to make an advertisement particularly exposed to users' eyes. This is because various texts and pictures are mixed with the banner advertisement in the home page, to accordingly make the banner advertisement not so easily 5 exposed to the users' eyes.

However, since a skin image is so easily exposed to users' eyes in the present invention, an advertising effect is very good.

(b) In the present invention, a space in the home page 10 is not used but a tool bar area of the original browser is used, in order to load an advertisement, that is, the advertisement is displayed on not a client region of a user browser but on a non-client region thereof. Thus, more information can be stably displayed on the non-client region 15 than on the client region in the home page.

Also, on the viewpoint of the individual home page producer, the above function enables him or her to produce his or her home page more aesthetically while forming an integrity with the browser.

20 In addition, the present invention provides a method for replacing a current skin by a selected skin according to a user selection, other than the method for automatically changing a current skin through the above-described procedure when a user accesses a particular home page, which 25 procedure is as follows (see FIG. 4B).

First, a user accesses a certain home page via a user's browser. Here, a skin file (msk) is linked in the home page.

If a user clicks the link in the home page (D1), the skin image controller 20 downloads a corresponding skin file (D2), and then stores the downloaded skin file in a skin file folder (D3). At the same time, a browser skin is replaced by the 5 corresponding skin (D4).

For example, a home page tag is set as the following HTML source code.

```
<HTML>
.....
10   <a href="/myskin.msk">click this to change a skin
automatically</a>
.....
</body>
</HTML>
```

15 In the same manner as that of the above method, a skin file of myskin.msk is a file which is loaded into a server where a corresponding home page exists. If a user accesses the home page through a browser, the home page source code is analyzed by the browser. Then, a message of "click this 20 to change a skin automatically" is displayed.

If the user clicks the message with a mouse, the 'myskin.msk' file contained in the corresponding server where the home page exists is transferred to a user's terminal.

25 Then, the skin image controller 20 recognizes the skin file of 'myskin.msk' is stored in a predetermined skin folder, and simultaneously the browser skin is

automatically changed into the 'myskin.msk' skin.

2. Random conversion function

If a user downloads a skin image controller 20 and installs the downloaded skin image controller 20, a random function is set as a default value.

The user can set or stop the random function. If a certain amount of time elapses, the browser skin is automatically converted into another skin in the random folder.

10 (a) Random set

A user can select a random set in the main menu of the skin image controller 20, store skin folders which suits his or her taste in a random folder, and then set a random function. In the case that a random function is not wanted, a default value can be set as a fixed skin.

The fixed skin is a function of showing only one skin fixedly in a browser.

(b) Advertising function

In the case that a user views a skin after a random set, a random conversion function is performed with respect to various skins contained in a folder set by the user, and advertisement skins are inserted between these various skins, to thereby make a random function performed. For example, the advertisement skins are inserted as indicated in the following Table 1.

Table 1

		Folder name	Skin file name	In the case that X folder is set as random
5	X		a.msk	a.msk
			b.msk	b.msk
			c.msk	Advertisement 1
			d.msk	c.msk
			e.msk	d.msk
10	Y			Advertisement 2
				e.msk
15	Z			Advertisement 3

1) In the case that a user designates files of a.msk, b.msk, c.msk, d.msk, and e.msk in a random folder among msk files which are skin files, or a user designates one folder as a random folder among user's folders, advertisement files such as advertisement 1, advertisement 2 and advertisement 3 are downloaded from the server for performing an advertisement, and then a sequence to be applied as a skin 20 is determined with respect to the advertisement files downloaded from the server.

2) Considering the determined sequence of the advertisement files, a final sequence of the skin folder in the random folder including the advertisement files is 25 determined.

3) A skin is applied in the browser according to the determined sequence.

Industrial Applicability

As described above, a skin applied according to the present invention has the following features.

- 1) An aesthetic desire of an individual user can be satisfied. An existing Explorer menu of a gray color can be escaped, to thereby decorate the Explorer as desired with a user's desired picture or an advertisement skin picture.
- 2) While satisfying an aesthetic desire of an individual user, an advertisement skin picture can maximize an advertisement effect. Although an existing banner advertisement and various Internet advertisement technique using the existing banner advertisement do not satisfy a user's aesthetic desire but emphasize only a simple cyber money, the advertisement skin picture satisfies a user's aesthetic desire while performing an advertisement.
- 3) The present invention does not consume a separate space for advertising. Advertisement techniques such as an existing banner advertisement or various toolbar type using the same cannot but consume a predetermined space on a user's computer screen. However, a skin provided by a skin image controller 20 does not use a separate space for advertising but uses a menu space originally occupied by the Explorer, to thereby perform an advertisement and thus minimize inconveniences of an individual user.
- 4) An advertiser can perform a target marketing as described above to thereby enhance an advertising

efficiency.

5) An individual user can provided with an easy-to-use interface. A skin image controller 20 according to the present invention is an Explorer skin 5 dedicated program and thus provides an interface convenient for managing and using skin picture files collected by the individual user.

6) A collection skin, that is, a collection dedicated skin picture file is provided, to satisfy an individual user, 10 which is a unique feature of the present invention only. Thus, skins are not only collected but also can be collected through a limited number of collection skins to be sold, as in a post stamp collection.

7) The logo of the Internet Explorer showing as an 15 animation during connection or access of the Internet is changed into a logo 50 of an advertiser, to thereby maximize an advertising effect further.

As described above, the present invention suffices a convenience and an aesthetic desire as well as a collection 20 desire of users, and also provides a fun. Also, advertisers can escape from an existing banner advertisement or a discontinuous advertisement and thus maximize an advertising effect while sufficing an aesthetic desire of users positively. In addition, an operator who operates 25 the system according to the present invention can achieve a total profit besides securing members and advertising fees.

As described above, the present invention has been described with respect to the particularly preferred embodiments, but the present invention is not limited in the above-described embodiments. It is apparent to one who has 5 an ordinary skill in the art that there are many variations and modifications within the scope of the appended claims with departing off from the spirit of the present invention.

What is claimed is:

1. An advertising system using a dynamic Windows skin applied on a Windows screen in a user terminal, the
5 advertising system comprising:

a number of user terminals each having a web browser therein, which can be accessed to the Internet by using the web browser;

10 at least one skin information providing server for providing at least one skin image data provided from a corresponding home page to a user terminal when a user accesses the Internet through the user terminal; and

15 a system server for allowing the user to download a skin image controller when the user accesses the home page in a server through the Internet from the user terminal, wherein the system server includes:

20 at least one web server for allowing the user terminal to download the skin image controller and various skin image files upon request of the user when the number of user terminals access a home page in the system server;

25 a program server for providing advertisement skin image information based on a user analysis to a Windows screen in the user terminal while maintaining a connection state to the server through the Internet when the user selects an advertisement menu and managing a user's advertisement exposure time for compensation for the user, by the skin image controller installed in the user terminal;

and

a database (DB) server for storing and managing various data including member information, advertisement use information and various skin image information.

5

2. The advertising system of claim 1, further comprising at least one information provision server for allowing the user terminal to download the skin image controller when the user accesses bulletin boards in various servers through the Internet with his or her own terminal.

10 3. The advertising system of claim 1, wherein databases (DBs) provided in the database server comprises:

15 a membership information DB containing each membership information;

a membership use information DB containing information on how each member uses a home page site in the system server and an advertisement of the skin image controller;

20 a skin DB containing each skin image information;

a collection skin DB containing each information of a collection skin issued for collection in a limited number; and

25 a bulletin board & other DB storing other information necessary for operation of various bulletin boards and the home page.

4. The advertising system of claim 3, wherein the membership use information DB comprises a cyber money of each member, a collection skin information, and information about a residence place, age, gender and job of each member.

5

5. The advertising system of claim 1, wherein a main menu interface is provided in order to interface the user terminal and the user when the skin image controller is performed, and wherein said main menu interface comprises:

10 a main menu display positioned in the upper portion, for displaying a plurality of main menus as icons;

a skin list display for providing an interface for allowing a user to select one of the plurality of the stored skin files;

15 a sub-menu display for displaying menus having functions of managing the skin files displayed on the skin list display; and

20 a preview display for displaying the skin file selected in the skin list display in size smaller than an actual size and assisting the user to select the skin file.

6. The advertising system of claim 5, wherein said plurality of main menus comprises:

an end menu for terminating the skin image controller;

25 a set menu for establishing an environment of a program necessary for operating the skin image controller;

a home page menu having a function of loading a new

browser and moving the Windows screen to the home page of the system server;

a skin view menu for toggling a skin function of the browser;

5 a random conversion menu for automatically converting a number of the selected skin files in random sequence; and a skin making menu for converting the user's drawn picture file or the existing picture file into a skin file.

10 7. An advertising method using a dynamic Windows skin, the advertising method comprising the steps of:

accessing one of a home page in a system server and a bulletin board in an information provision server, which are connected through the Internet from a user's terminal 15 by a user, and downloading a skin image controller program and at least one skin file from the selected home page or bulletin board so as to be registered and installed in a start program in a terminal;

20 establishing the skin file at random sequence and converting the skin file into a browser skin;

displaying a main menu interface on a display screen of the terminal in which the main menu interface includes a main menu display in response to the skin image controller program executed by the user; and

25 replacing the currently displayed advertisement skin by an advertisement skin provided from a corresponding website, if the user moves another website from the

currently accessed website.

8. The advertising method of claim 7, further comprising the steps of:

- 5 accessing the system server from the terminal, for receiving a plurality of advertisement skin files;
- designating a sequence at random with respect to which one of the received plurality of advertisement skin files will be advertised; and
- 10 replacing the advertisement skin periodically in every set time according to the set sequence and distributing the replaced advertisement skin on the Windows screen.

9. The advertising method of claim 7, further comprising the steps of:

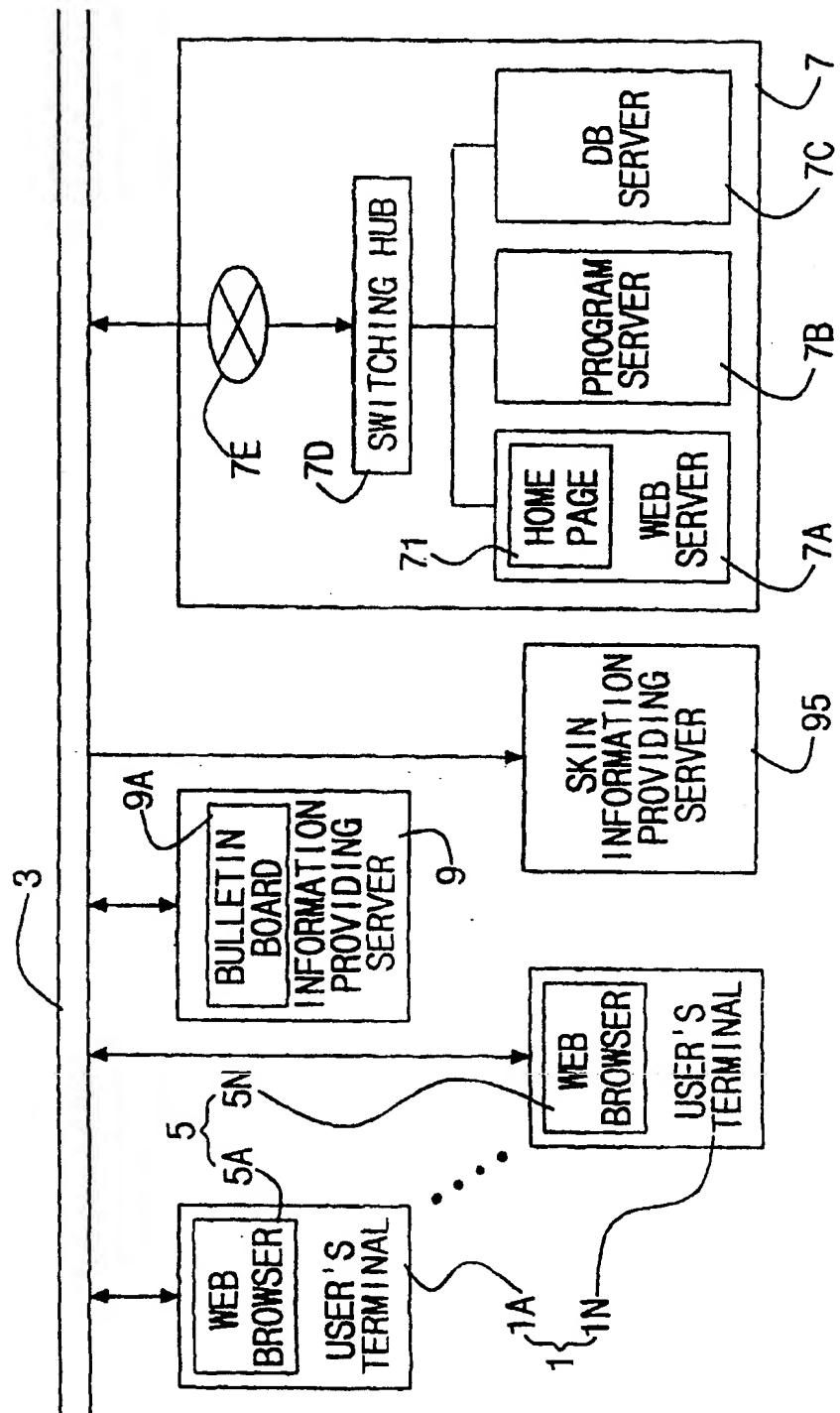
- 15 judging whether the current advertisement has been selected in response to a user's click of an end menu in a main menu;
- 20 storing compensation details corresponding to a time for which a user has viewed an advertisement in a member use information database of the system server, in the case that an advertisement has been selected just before in the result of judgement, and outputting a message concerning the user's altered use details to the user; and
- 25 removing a tray icon created according to installation of the skin image controller and terminating the skin image controller program after having undergone the termination

procedure of the system.

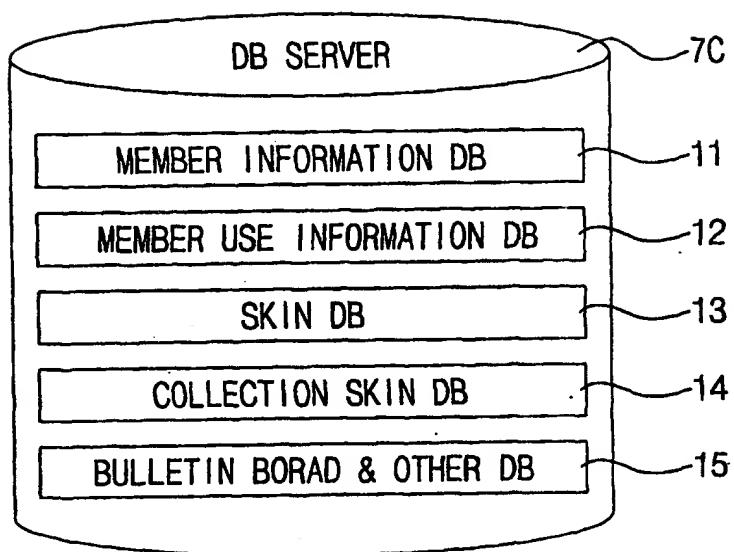
10. The advertising method of claim 7, wherein said main menu comprises:

- 5 an end menu for terminating the skin image controller;
- a set menu for establishing an environment of a program necessary for operating the skin image controller;
- a home page menu having a function of loading a new browser and moving the Windows screen to the home page of
- 10 the system server;
- a skin view menu for toggling a skin function of the browser;
- a random conversion menu for automatically converting a number of the selected skin files in random sequence; and
- 15 a skin making menu for converting the user's drawn picture file or the existing picture file into a skin file, wherein an advertisement skin display procedure is terminated in response to selection of one of the main menu and a user interface of the selected menu is provided to
- 20 a main menu interface.

FIG. 1



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FIG. 2

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FIG. 3a

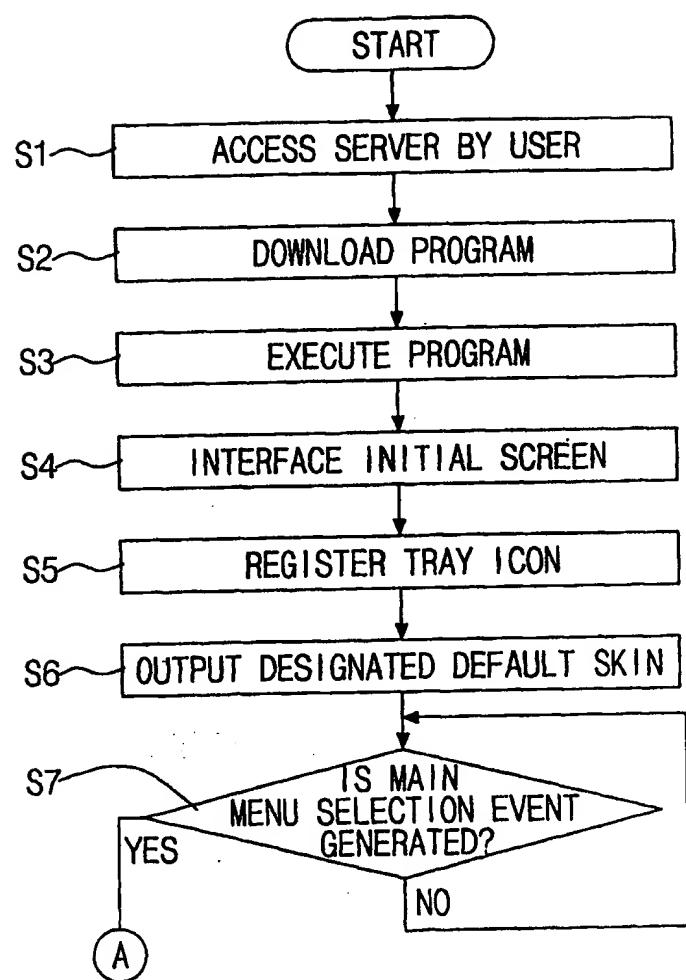


FIG. 3b

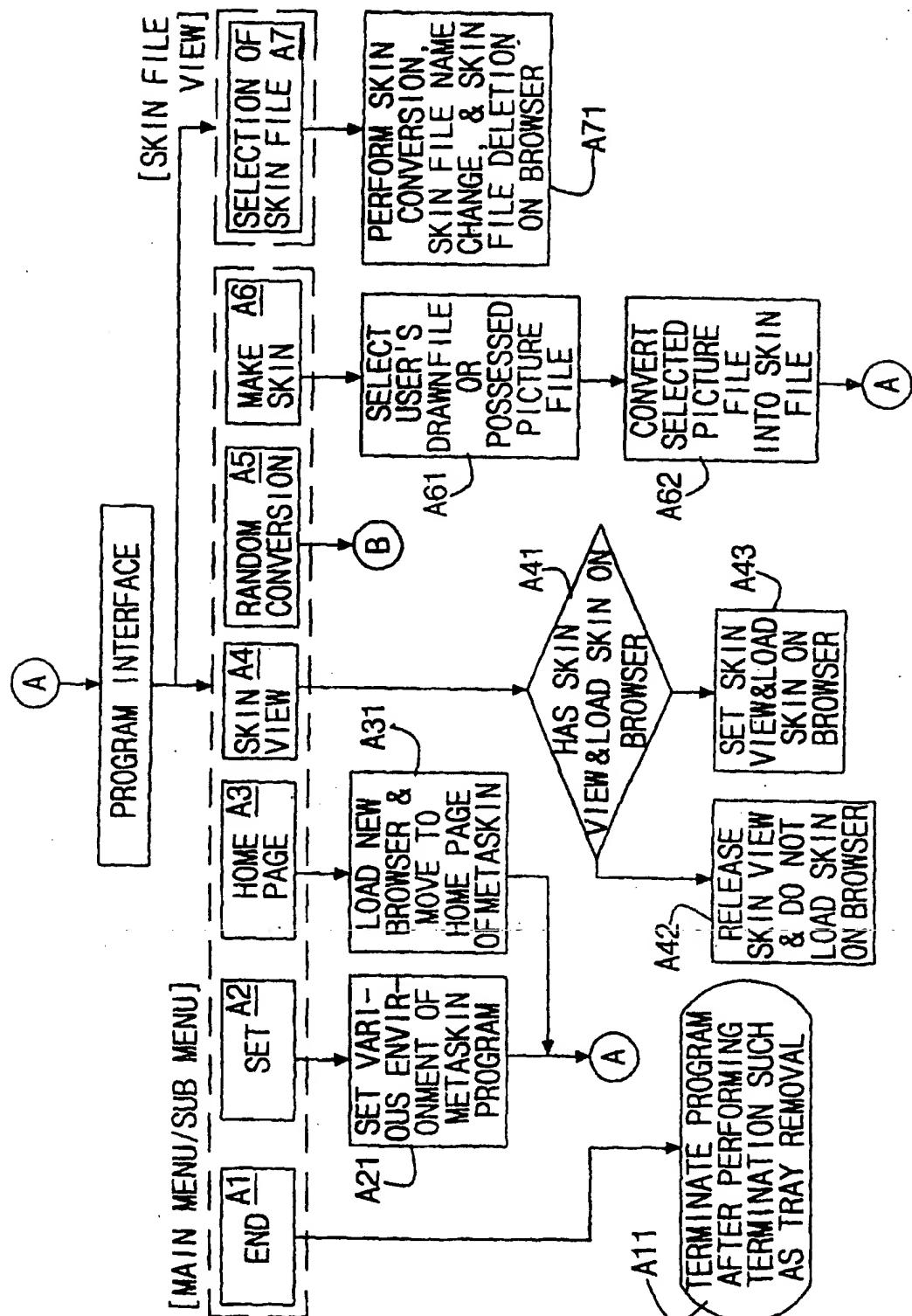


FIG. 3c

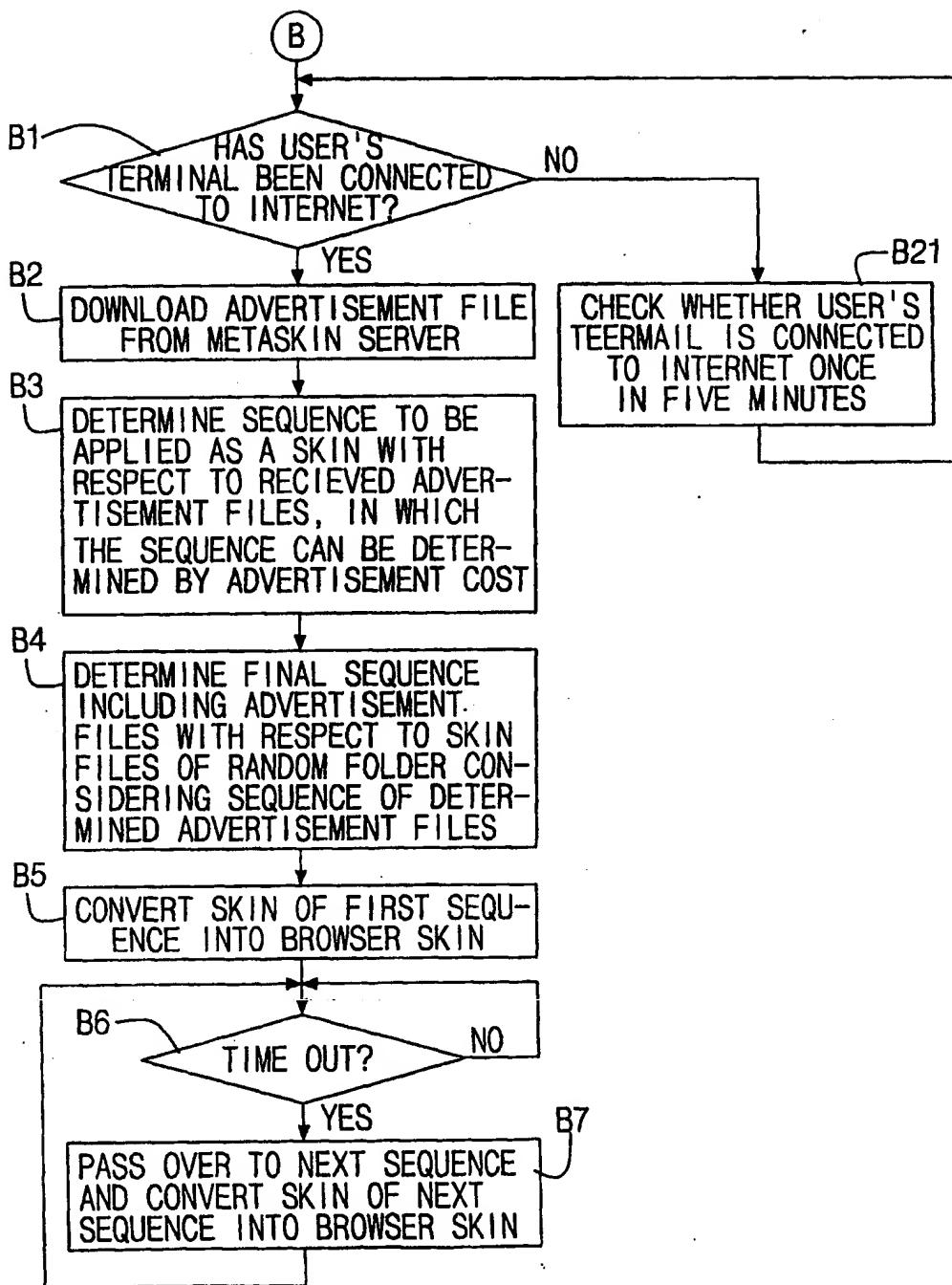
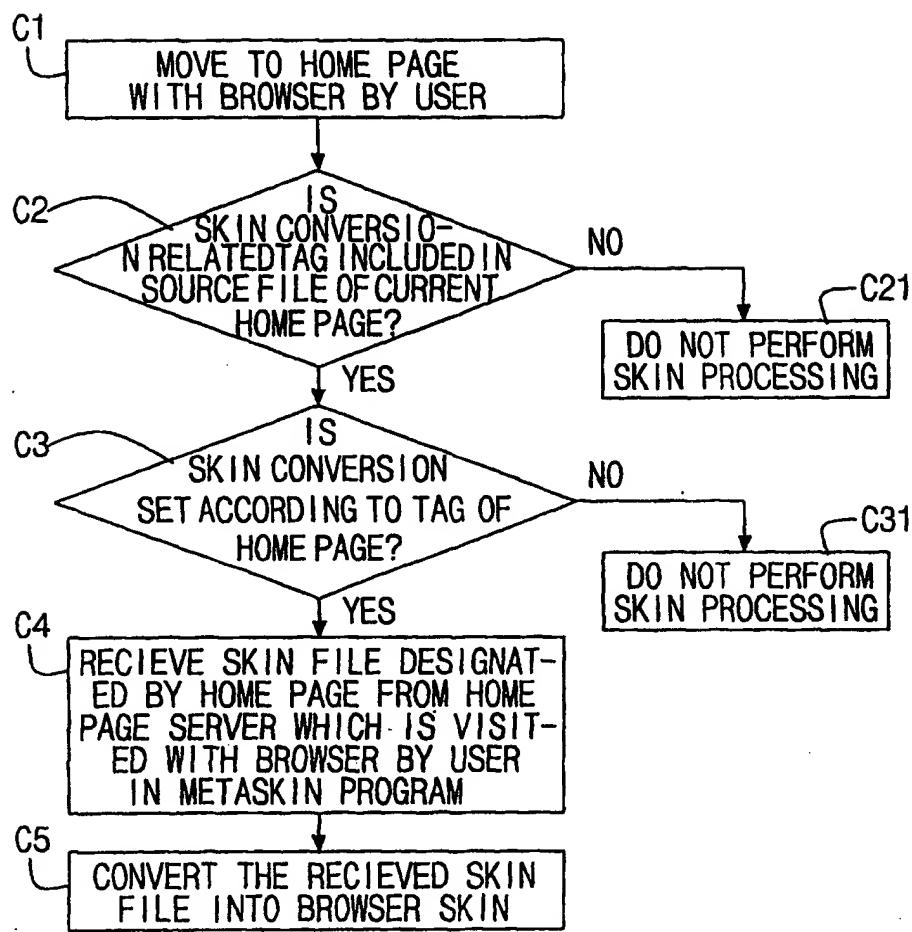


FIG. 4a



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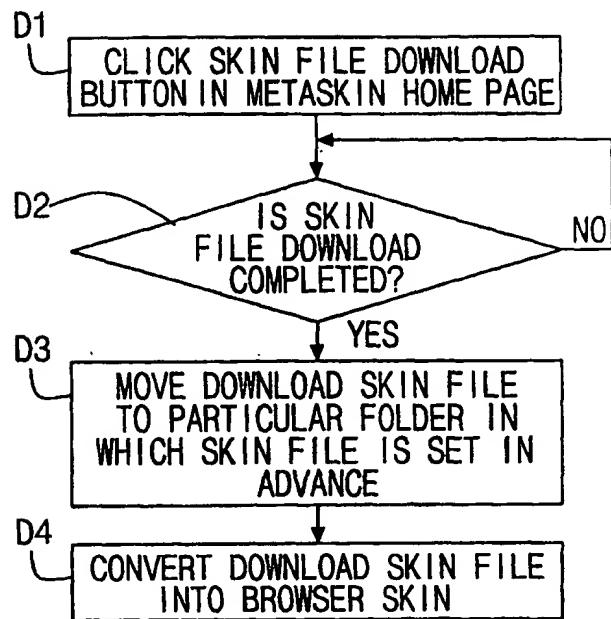
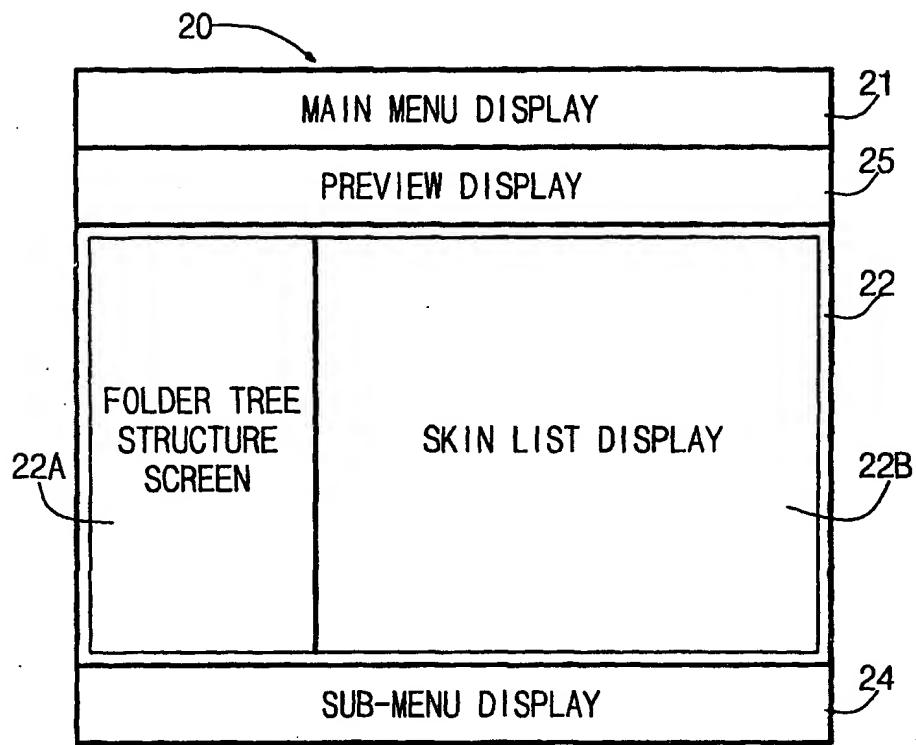
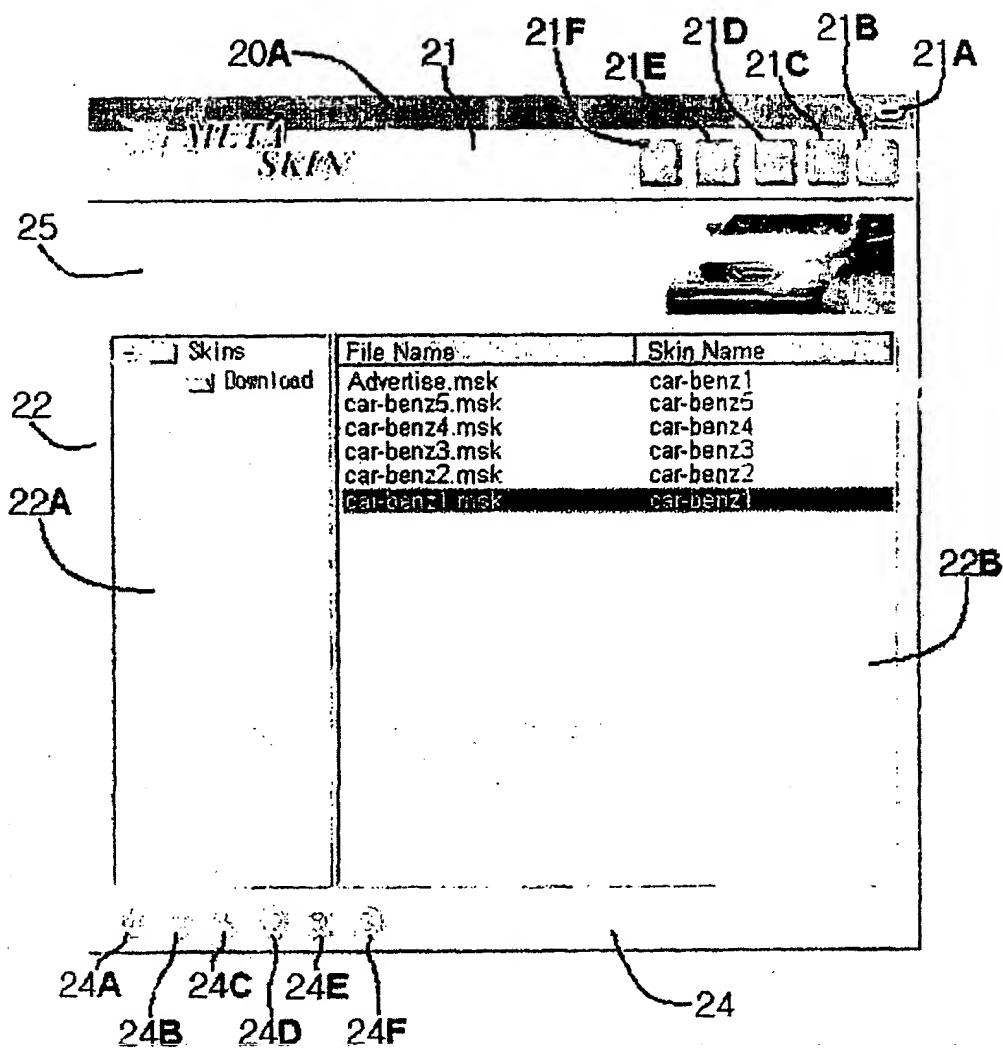
FIG. 4b

FIG. 5

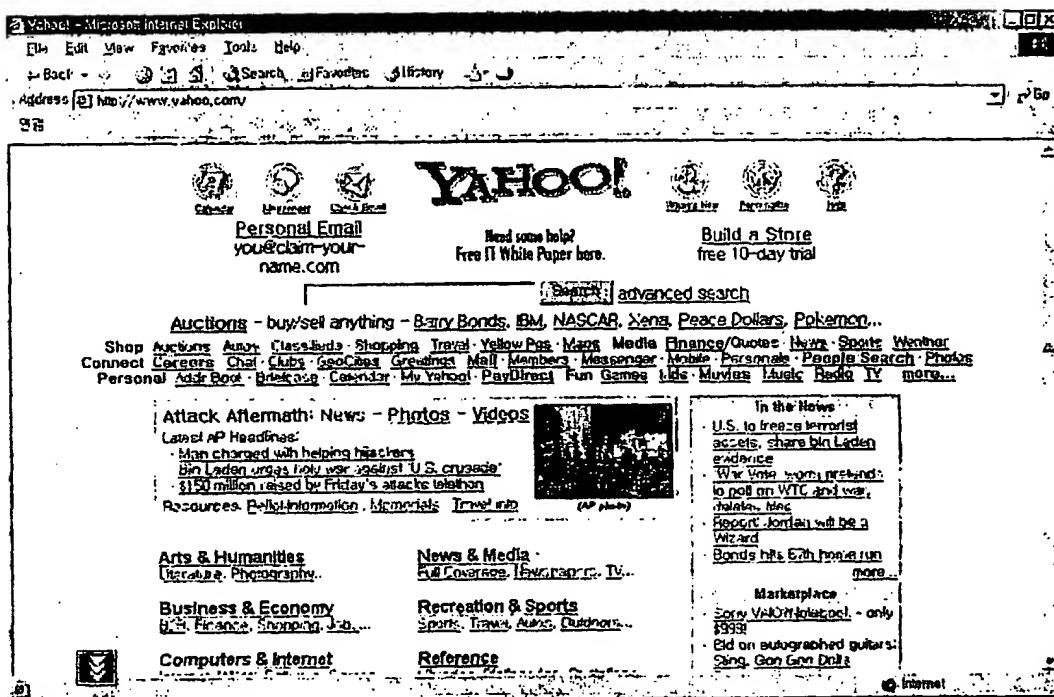
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FIG. 6



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FIG. 7a



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FIG. 7b

